

Kruse Rhododendron

This 317-acre state reserve is located directly adjacent to Salt Point and features a beautiful second-growth redwood forest mixed with Douglasfirs, grand firs, tanoaks, and many rhododendrons. Each May the green of the forest is punctuated by patches of pink as these rhododendrons burst into bloom. The wealth of rhododendrons is a direct result of normal plant succession patterns following a severe fire that once occurred here. Today, the regenerating forest is gradually overwhelming the rhododendrons.

There are five miles of hiking trails through the quiet forest and a number of picturesque bridges over fern-filled canyons made by the seasonal streams that abound in this region each winter.

Edward P. E. Kruse donated these 317 acres to the people of California in 1933 as a living memorial to his father, a founder of San Francisco's German Bank (later known as First Western Bank). The land was part of a large ranch established in 1880 on which the Kruse family raised sheep and carried on logging and tanbark harvesting operations.



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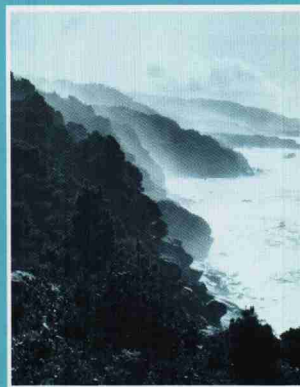
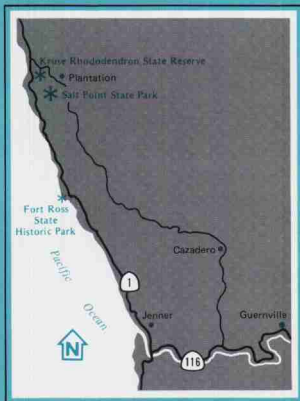
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Salt Point photos by Den Marley

Salt Point State Park

Kruse Rhododendron State Reserve



Salt Point State Park
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Jenner, California 95450
Phone: (707) 847-3221

Ocean Condition Recording: (707) 847-3221
(Updated between 7:30 and 9:00 a.m. daily)

Salt Point

Salt Point State Park is located on the rugged northern California coastline about ninety miles north of San Francisco on State Highway One. The shoreline within the 6,000-acre park features rocky promontories such as Salt Point which jut out into the Pacific Ocean. There are also a number of coves such as Gerstle Cove in the lee of the point.

The park includes one of the first underwater parks in California. Fishing is permitted throughout the area with the exception of Gerstle Cove Marine Reserve, within which marine life is completely protected. The upland portion of the park features both grassland and forest areas.

The most popular activities at Salt Point State Park include camping, picnicking, fishing, skin and SCUBA diving, as well as hiking and horseback riding.

Camping

A thirty-unit campground is located in the upland portion of the park not far from the shore. Each site has a table and fire pit. Drinking water and bathroom facilities are located nearby. On the other side of Highway One in the eastward part of the park there is an eighty-site family campground with tables, stoves, drinking water, and bathroom facilities but no showers. Twenty walk-in campsites and ten hiker/biker sites are also located in this part of the park. Environmental campsites and facilities for group camping are also available.

Campsite reservations for the period between March 2 and November 30 can be made up to eight weeks in advance by calling MISTIX at 1-800 / 444-PARK and using your VISA, Mastercard, or American Express card. Group camp facilities can be reserved up to twelve weeks in advance.

Picnicking

Picnic areas are located at Stump Beach, South Gerstle Cove and Fisk Mill Cove where running water and restrooms are available.

Plants

As the terrain rises northeast of Highway One, coastal brush and grasslands blend into lush growths of Bishop pine, Douglasfir, madrone, tanoak, groves of second growth redwood, and quiet meadow areas. At the top of the coastal ridge, at about 1,000 feet elevation, there is a large open "prairie" and a pygmy forest where stands of cypress, pine, and even the normally gigantic redwood grow in profusion - all of them stunted. Similar stands of pygmy forest can be found all along the Pacific Coast from Monterey County northward to Mendocino County where the coast has been uplifted over the centuries.

Animals

Animal life is abundant. Black-tailed deer, raccoon, coyote, bobcat, gray fox, badger, striped skunk, and dozens of varieties of rodents such as squirrel, chipmunk, and field mouse are native to this area. Bear and mountain lion occasionally range the area, although visitors rarely see them.

Many kinds of birds can be found here including the brown pelican, osprey, and other shore and water-oriented birds.

Gray whales can be seen between December and April as they migrate southward from their summer feeding areas in the Bering Sea to their breeding and calving areas along the coast of Baja California.

Divers enjoy Salt Point's rich offshore flora and fauna, and the relatively protected waters of Gerstle Cove where a wide variety of marine organisms flourish.

Riding and Hiking Trails

Hiking and horseback trails extend to many remote sections of the park. Motor vehicles are permitted only on paved roads. Mountain bikes must stay on paved or fire roads. Dogs must be kept on leash at all times (six-foot maximum length) and are permitted only in the developed areas of Gerstle Cove, Woodside, and Fisk Mill Cove. Hikers are also asked to stay on developed trails in order to preserve the park's unspoiled qualities.

Things to Remember

Salt Point and the area around it were once the home of several groups of southwestern or Kasha Pomo Indians. Their camp and village sites can be traced today by the presence of "middens" that are of considerable archeological importance. These sites are protected by state and federal law and should be left undisturbed.

The risk of wild fire is always great in grassland and forest areas. Ground fires or open fires of any kind are therefore not permitted. You may use your own off-the-ground barbecue for cooking in the picnic or campground areas, or you may use the facilities provided.

The tide pools along the shoreline are home to a wonderful variety of fragile marine organisms that are fascinating to observe. Feel free to explore these areas, but please remember that many of these organisms can be damaged or destroyed by even the simple act of turning over a rock and exposing the animals to the sun. That's why they are now protected by law.

